

# FLORIDA GRAND **opera**



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## NEWS RELEASE

## FACT SHEET

Florida Grand Opera (FGO) was formed in June 1994 by the merger of Greater Miami Opera, founded in 1941, and The Opera Guild Inc., of Fort Lauderdale, founded in 1945. Celebrating its 71th year of continuous performances during the 2011-2012 season, FGO stands as one of the oldest performing arts organizations in Florida. In addition to producing standard repertoire, FGO also presents lesser known operas, as well as commissions and produces new operas. Annually, main stage performances are attended by nearly 70,000 people, and education and outreach programs serve over 20,000 students. FGO offers several highly successful outreach and educational programs, including its internationally-recognized Young Artist Studio.

### LEADERSHIP:

Florida Grand Opera's Board of Directors includes many of South Florida's philanthropic and business leaders. In the March 2003 issue of Worth Magazine, the Opera made the list of America's 100 Most Prestigious Boards and was ranked #1 in the Miami area.

General Director and CEO Robert M. Heuer is the third person to lead Florida Grand Opera in its 71-year history. He joined the company in 1979 as Director of Production and assumed leadership of the company as General Director and CEO in 1986.

General Director & CEO	.....	Robert Heuer
Music Director	.....	Ramon Tebar
Chairman	.....	Jane Robinson
President	.....	Victor H. Mendelson
Vice Chairman	.....	Dr. Linda Balent
Vice Chairman	.....	Dr. James Doan
Vice Chairman	.....	Arlene A. Mendelson
Treasurer	.....	Charles E. Porter
Assistant Treasurer	.....	Diane de Vries Ashley
Secretary	.....	Eva U. Gordon
Assistant Secretary	.....	Barbara C. Copanos

**Board of Directors:** 41 members

### Staff and contracted employees

30 full-time staff

130-150 part-time and contractual staff, including artists, musicians and production staff

## PRODUCTION:

**Budget in 2010-2011 season:** \$11,513,177

Contributed income (donations): 52%

Earned income (ticket sales): 48%

**Number of orchestra musicians:** 65-75 per production

**Average number of choristers per production:** 40 per production

**Annual attendance in the 2010-2011 season**

Main stage productions: 53,800

Education & community outreach events: 20,000+

**Main stage performances scheduled for 2011-2012 season:** 30

Moreno Torroba's *Luisa Fernanda*

Puccini's *La rondine*

Verdi's *Rigoletto*

Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette*

**Main stage performances in 2010-11 season:** 30

Puccini's *Turandot*

Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*

Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

DiChiera's *Cyrano*

## ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS:

Throughout its 71 years, FGO has established itself as one of the nation's leading opera companies by fostering up-and-coming artists, hosting world-renowned artists, housing exceptional productions of classical and contemporary repertoire, as well as contributing to Miami's cultural growth through community education initiatives and performances.

- FGO is the Southeast's first regional Opera Company.
- FGO is the 7<sup>th</sup> oldest Opera Company in the United States, dating from 1941 in Miami and 1945 in Fort Lauderdale.
- Florida Grand Opera takes pride in having featured some of the world's leading singers, including Regina Resnick, Roberta Peters, Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Beverly Sills, Renata Scotto, James Morris, Sherrill Milnes, Nicolai Gedda, Evelyn Lear, Thomas Stewart, Diana Soviero, Elizabeth Futral, Helen Donath, Deborah Voigt, Fernando de la Mora and David Daniels, while nurturing the rising stars of the opera stage such as Sarah Coburn, Leah Partridge, Kelly Kaduce and James Valent.
- FGO's 89-work repertoire represents forty-three (43) composers and spans nearly four hundred (400) years of the art form. FGO continues to add to its repertory of operas, mounting twenty-five (25) productions over the past twenty (20) years not previously seen by South Florida audiences, including the commissioning and world premiere of *Anna Karenina* in 2007.

## GROUPS & ASSOCIATIONS:

### Affiliates:

Florida Grand Opera has four (4) Affiliate Groups operating in both Broward and Miami-Dade counties, with over 1,000 volunteers and supporters:

- **Crescendo Circle** – This is a group of professionals who support the opera with contributions of time and resources. The members are brought together by a common interest in opera and culture in their community. For more information about Crescendo Circle, please contact Maria Ordonez at (305) 854-1643 or at [mordonez@fgo.org](mailto:mordonez@fgo.org).
- **The Guild of Florida Grand Opera** - Founded in 1987, the Guild, a major volunteer support group of FGO, is committed to developing new audiences, promoting community awareness, and raising funds to support the Opera's operations. The Guild offers a host of entertaining events throughout the

Opera Season. For more information about The Guild, please contact Emily Borababy at (305) 854-1643 or at [eborababy@fgo.org](mailto:eborababy@fgo.org).

- **Opera Society** - Now in its 31st year, this group fosters community interest in music, especially opera; promotes friendship among music lovers; provides charitable, educational and cultural projects for the public; and raises funds for Florida Grand Opera in Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach. For more information about the Opera Society, please contact Justin Moss at (305) 854-1643 or at [jmoss@fgo.org](mailto:jmoss@fgo.org).
- **Young Patronesses of the Opera (YPO)** - Celebrating over 50 years of service, this invitation-only women's group from the Miami area volunteers time to offer programs focused primarily on children's education, as well as historically providing major support to FGO for both annual and capital programs. For more information, visit the YPO Web site at [www.YPO-Miami.org](http://www.YPO-Miami.org) or contact Denise Courshon at (305) 854-1643 or at [dcourshon@fgo.org](mailto:dcourshon@fgo.org).

### Member Groups:

- **Lyric Society** - Membership in the Lyric Society begins at \$1,500, and offers special benefits and recognition at the various levels of contribution. These include priority seating and concierge ticket service, invitations to dress rehearsals, membership in the Opera Club, and advance notice of and invitations to special events, among others. At the level of \$15,000 and more, donors also receive a half-page profile with photo and bio in the Program Book. For more information about the Lyric Society, please contact Maria Ordonez at (305) 854-1643 or at [mordonez@fgo.org](mailto:mordonez@fgo.org).
- **Crown Jewel Society** - Membership in the Society of Crown Jewels begins at the \$25,000 level. It reflects the commitment of major donors to the mission of Florida Grand Opera and represents the backbone of support for the Opera's annual operations. Donor recognition includes a full-page profile and photograph in the Season Program Book. For more information about the Crown Jewel Society, please contact Emily Borababy at (305) 854-1643 or at [eborababy@fgo.org](mailto:eborababy@fgo.org).

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS:

Florida Grand Opera reaches more than 20,000 members of the community each year through its education and outreach programs in both Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

### New 2011-2012 Programs:

- **Zarzuela: A Cultural Exploration** – This initiative introduces high school students to the rich, multi-faceted art form that is *zarzuela* through 15-week residencies by FGO staff and artists at preselected high schools in order to educate students in the musical, visual and theatrical nature of the genre. The residency culminates in a performance organized by the students, which will be free and open to the public.
- **FGO Teen Council** – This career-centric mentoring program is comprised of 20 high school students selected for their excellence and interest in the arts. Designed to promote cultural awareness to the industry leaders of tomorrow, this program works through creative and interdisciplinary projects to pull back the curtain on the inner workings of an opera company.
- **Read Along, Sing a Song** - In conjunction with area libraries as well as Young Patronesses of the Opera, FGO holds a series of programs on Saturday mornings throughout the season employing opera as a vehicle for parents and children to make reading fun and accessible. Activities include integrating sung and spoken word into story time as well as performance components designed to boost confidence.
- **Broward Night at the Opera** - Provides field trips for three high schools to attend operas at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts at little or no cost. School participation for each year is chosen by Broward County Schools.

- **Film Retrospective** –This cinematic series focuses on the production of *Romeo et Juliette* and include lectures exploring the historical interpretations of the timeless tale through its various treatments in film. Events are free and open to the public.

#### **Annual Programs:**

- **In-School “Informances”** - From wig and makeup designers to technical staff and young artists, FGO sends individuals into the community to share their knowledge with students of all ages to enrich the classroom experience.
- **Student Dress Rehearsal** - Approximately 1,000 tickets are made available to students for the final dress rehearsal of each season production. As a prerequisite, students are briefed on content, context, and behavioral expectations by classroom teachers using materials provided by FGO along with professional development workshops for teachers. Nearly 5,000 high school students attend final dress rehearsals annually.
- **Family Day** – A day of opera-related activities held at the Arsht and Broward Centers designed to engage families in the opera experience. Activities include lecture demonstrations, arts and crafts, instrument playground and Young Artist performance.
- **Books & Books Seminars** - Designed to engage adults and older students in the opera experience, FGO partners with Books & Books to present seminars on select operas throughout the season featuring comprehensive discussions and live performances by the Young Artist Studio.
- **Opera in the Park** - In the 2011-2012 season, Florida Grand Opera will expand its Opera in the Park program to include two performances, one on Miami Beach at Collins Park and another on the Esplanade in Fort Lauderdale. These outdoor, family friendly programs include performances by FGO’s acclaimed Young Artists and feature selections from the season as well as audience favorites. During the 2011-2012 season, Opera in the Park will be presented in tandem with Family Day.
- **Study Guide** - In efforts to promote learning at all ages, FGO produces and makes available online study guides for each opera with details on the plot, characters, and musical themes as well as the historical and musicological context of each production.

#### **FGO’S YOUNG ARTIST STUDIO:**

Founded in 1984, Florida Grand Opera’s Young Artist Studio has gained worldwide recognition as one of the leading operatic training programs in the nation. The respected program provides talented young singers with an opportunity to refine the skills developed during formal music education, targeting those areas necessary to develop a successful opera career.

The selected artists receive extensive coaching and instruction during the 9 month residency. Under the guidance of a staff of working professionals, Florida Grand Opera’s Young Artists study with renowned professional artists and teachers from every aspect of the world of opera while gaining valuable performance experience. Singers receive regular individual coaching sessions and participate in coachings, master classes and seminars given by acclaimed guest artists and teachers. Special classes in audition techniques, fight choreography, dance, tax and personal finance, stress management and public relations may also be offered. Young Artists also perform principal and supporting roles and serve as covers, or understudies, in the opera company’s main stage performances.

#### **Staff:**

Kelly Anderson, Director of Artistic Administration  
 Caren Levine, Principal Coach and Studio Manager  
 John Keene, Head of Music Staff / Coach  
 Ramon Tebar, Music Director

**Number of Young Artists per season: 7-10**

**Notable Graduates:** Rene Barbera, Russell Thomas and Troy Cook, Rachele Gilmore, Leah Partridge, Elizabeth Caballero, Andrew Bidlack and Tom Corbeil.

**Master Class Instructors and Guests (2010-2011):** Carlos Montane, Elizabeth Futral, Sherrill Milnes, Diana Soviero, Bernard Uzan, Jonathan Pell and David DiChiera

#### **VENUE AND FACILITIES INFORMATION:**

Performances of its main stage opera productions are given in Miami at the Sanford and Dolores Ziff Ballet Opera House at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County and at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale.

#### **TICKETING INFORMATION:**

FGO's Box Office is located at the Doral Center on 8390 NW 25 St., Doral, FL 33122 and is open to the public from 10am to 4pm, Mondays through Fridays during the season. Offices are closed on Fridays in the summer. Tickets may also be purchased by phone at (800) 741-1010 or online at [www.FGO.org](http://www.FGO.org).

#### **ABOUT FLORIDA GRAND OPERA:**

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Florida Grand Opera, recognized for funding by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Funding is also provided, in part, by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners as recommended by the Broward Cultural Council and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, Cultural Affairs Council, the Mayor and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners and the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council. Program support is provided by the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council. Florida Grand Opera is a Resident Company of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County and a member company of OPERA America.

American Airlines is the Official Airline, Intercontinental Miami is the Official Hotel and Steinway & Sons is the Official Piano of Florida Grand Opera. For more information on Florida Grand Opera, visit us at [www.FGO.org](http://www.FGO.org).

*updated July 27, 2011*